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Transactions of The Chartered Surveyors' Institution

SESSION 1937-1938.

AT THE ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Chartered Surveyors' Institution, Monday, 10th January, 1938.

Mr. ROBERT COBB (President) in the Chair.

NEW MEMBERS.

The following new members were received by the PRESIDENT prior to the meeting and signed the Register:—

Fellow :

LUCAS, JOHN DE BLAQUIERE TINDALL

Professional Associates :

ARMITAGE, CECIL LAWRENCE
BARE, JACK STORMONT
FERGUSON, DOUGLAS WILLIAM
ENEFER, GEOFFREY BARRITT
FITZHARRIS, THE VISCOUNT
FRYER, HENRY JAMES
HARLAND, WILFRED SCOTT
MCGILLIVRAY, JOHN IAN
HIGGITT, NORMAN EDWARD
PARKER, ALFRED DEREK MCKELLEN
ROYLE, GREIG GORDON
SLIPPER, JOHN EDWARD
SMITH, RONALD MACKAY
SPARKS, KENNETH GRENFELL
WARD, FRANCIS CHANTRY

A DISCUSSION took place on Sir ROY ROBINSON'S paper entitled

BRITISH FORESTRY.

The PRESIDENT said that Sir Roy Bobinson, who was the Chairman of the Forestry Commission, was very well known for the work he had carried out in connection with the timbers of England. Sir Roy had done his best to restore some of the land of this country to profitable use. He might not be altogether popular in some quarters but he had done his duty, and everyone present that evening was pleased to see Sir Roy and grateful to him for coming to the meeting to present his paper.

Mr. ALAN ARNOLD (Past-President, Member of Council), in proposing a vote of thanks to Sir Roy Robinson for his paper said that when he had been invited to propose the vote, on first impulse it occurred to him that it would give him a splendid opportunity for making a few criticisms, but then he remembered what his father had told him, that if one wanted to write a really unpleasant letter to anyone it was better to sleep on it first and one would write a very different letter in the morning. Personally he felt the truth of that now—he did not feel that he could make any criticisms of Sir Roy or the Forestry Commission. When the Commission came into being and he saw some of its plantations, he said to himself "Well, if those trees grow "I shall be very much surprised," but when he saw the same plantations a year or two afterwards he found the trees were beginning to grow up, and since then he had seen them progressing at quite a rapid rate. Therefore he did not think that much fault could be found with the Forestry Commission in regard to its methods of planting.

He had intended to speak very briefly on four points, three of which Sir Roy had dealt with in his paper, namely, grants in aid of planting, death duties on estates, and game. The fourth, which Sir Roy had studiously avoided, was the question of tariffs on imported foreign converted timber. He understood that Mr. Leslie Wood was going to deal with game, and he would therefore refer to the three points of grants in aid, death duties and tariffs.

First of all he would like to say that he was sure many landowners would thoroughly enjoy reading the paper, which

was very interesting and instructive. He spoke as the representative of a good many landowners who had for some years done their best to plant devastated areas and make new plantations, and he wanted to say what he could in defence of the action of the landowners, because he felt very strongly that they had done a great deal towards maintaining the supply of timber in this country. Sir Roy Robinson had said that the woodlands of the country were in a bad state in 1914 and that he had not seen very much improvement in them since then. Personally he was bound to agree with Sir Roy as far as the latter part of that accusation was concerned, but he did not agree with him in regard to the former part of it. Sir Roy had himself pointed out in his paper that the landowners were able to supply the Government with 450,000 acres of mature timber for war purposes, and it seemed to him that that was no mean performance ; at any rate, it indicated that the landowners had not cut their timber and squandered the money, but had preserved their timber in case it should be wanted in such an emergency as arose in 1914.

With regard to the fact that there had been very little improvement since 1914, he thought there were very good reasons for that, because it must be remembered that during the War the 450,000 acres were devastated, and in many cases the Government contractors who purchased the timber left the areas in a terrible condition ; they did not burn up the toppings and the scrub. The landowners could not very well take in hand the replanting in 1918, and the forestry grants in aid did not come into force until 1921-22, so that the condition of those devastated areas during those four years became such that it was almost impossible to plant without some assistance.

Sir Roy Robinson referred to the grants which were begun in 1921-22, and he would like to say how very much those grants were appreciated by the landowners.

The author had stated that prior to 1922 the rate of planting by private owners was about 12,000 acres a year, and then said that 115,000 acres had been planted since the grants had been instituted. That meant that only about 7,000 acres per year had been planted between 1921 and 1936, which rather indicated that, although the grants were appreciated, they were not considered by the landowners to be anything like substantial enough to induce them to plant even at the same rate as before the War. He hoped that Sir Roy would use his influence on every possible occasion to secure a material increase in the grants. He found that landowners could not plant at an average cost of less than from £12 to £15 per acre ; he particularly wished to mention that figure because it might draw from Sir Roy a statement as to what it cost the Forestry Commission to plant.

He was inclined to agree with Sir Roy's statement that good timber always found a ready market, but there were cases in which a very disappointing price was offered, especially for Scotch fir. At the present moment he had two large parcels of Scotch fir for sale, trees which were probably a hundred years old, containing 50 to 70-foot meetings, and the best price he could get was 6d. per cubic foot. During the War, when it was impossible or, at any rate, very difficult to get timber imported, the Government contractors were paying 10½d. a foot, which rather tended to show that the very fact that timber could not be imported from foreign countries raised the price to what landowners then considered a quite satisfactory figure. He thought the only way in which the present situation could be met was by the imposition of tariffs on imported foreign converted timber. A few years ago when he represented the Institution before a Committee of the House of Commons he had rather pressed that point. Coming from the Institution, he had, of course, received a very sympathetic hearing, but it had been pointed out that, so long as the growers of timber could produce only 3 per cent. of the hardwoods and 14 per cent. of the softwoods, they must not look to the Government for much help. He did not think that was the right spirit to show. The Government admitted that it was necessary to have the timber, and, because the private landowners could not produce it at the required pace, the Forestry Commission had been brought into being to plant two or three million acres to supply what the country must have. It seemed to him, therefore, that if the Government would offer a sufficient inducement to landowners to grow all the timber they could, although it might be quite a small amount compared with what the Forestry Commission was going to grow, it would be useful if and when timber was needed in such quantities as were required during the War. He hoped that if the occasion ever arose Sir Roy would do as he himself had done and try to pursuade the Government to impose tariffs on imported foreign converted timber, because he could not help feeling that that would be a very great inducement to landowners to go on growing timber as the Government wished them to do.

He did not wish to deal with the question of death duties at any length, because he understood that Mr. Leslie Wood would deal with that subject, but he would like to refer briefly to the excellent letter from Mr. Strachan Gardiner which had appeared in *The Times* a few weeks ago. The death duties on estates had undoubtedly curtailed planting by private owners, and he did not think a better instance of that could be found than the one which Mr. Strachan Gardiner gave in his letter. He took the case of an estate with an agricultural value of £24,000,

with excess principal value of £1,500 and personal property of the deceased owner of £70,000, making a total of £95,500. The timber was valued at £23,000, bringing the total to £118,500. The death duties, on the 19 per cent. basis, came to £21,315, which was almost the same as the valuation of the timber. The present owner might have had to cut the whole of his timber to pay the death duties, and then the Government expected him to plant the devastated areas. It did not seem to him to be logical, and he hoped that landowners might obtain some considerable relief, both in the case of death duties on landed properties and also in regard to increased grants for the planting of new plantations, and he also hoped that tariffs would be imposed on imported timber.

He had already said that he would not deal with the question of game, but he had recently had an argument with Mr. Leslie Wood as to the proper size mesh for netting used for new plantations. When he himself started planting forty years ago he was told that no rabbit could get through a 1⅝-inch mesh, but when his eldest brother became experienced, he said the proper mesh was 1½ inches, and recently Mr. Leslie Wood had said that it ought to be 1¼ inches. Rabbits, however, were the same size now as they were when he started planting!

It gave him very great pleasure to express the thanks of the Institution and, he was sure, of the country generally to Sir Roy Robinson for his excellent paper and for the interest he was taking in forestry and all that he was doing for it.

Mr. Leslie S. Wood, F.L.A.S. (Chartered Surveyor, President, the Land Agents' Society), in seconding the vote of thanks said it gave him great pleasure to express the thanks of the Institution to Sir Roy Robinson for the trouble he had taken, in the midst of a very strenuous life, to prepare the paper, and for attending the meeting that evening to present the paper to the Institution. It was an excellent summary of the path that led up to the present position and of the hope for the future. He trusted that the conference which Sir Roy was calling together in the early part of February next might lead to important developments in respect to private estates. He hoped that Sir Roy felt at home amongst the members that evening, but, in case Sir Roy felt any doubt about it (he had indicated that he felt a little nervous on one or two questions), he would like to assure him that he was very heartily welcomed by the Institution. The Institution had been an inspiration and encouragement to many who were personally known to Sir Roy, and he only wished that many more of the younger members of the Institution would take the Diploma in Forestry and so qualify for the work

which he believed was going to increase in this country considerably. He felt sure that the men who could be produced by the Institution could be of very material help to the Forestry Commission in years to come. Forestry as the Commission saw it was not simply the planting of trees ; it involved a large number of questions with which the land agent was connected and in regard to which the land agent's training was bound to be an advantage. The man who combined a knowledge of forestry with a land agent's training had a very good opportunity of advancement.

Personally he would have been pleased if Sir Roy had expressed rather more definite opinions about those landowners who had no personal interest in their estates and who deliberately wrecked them, and those men who bought estates for the purpose of wrecking them, who cut down every stick of timber, who broke down hedges and gates and left the place a wilderness. He did not think that Sir Roy need have hesitated at all to express his very clear opinion of those people, as he himself would wish to express his. He thought such men were a discredit to the country, and he had no hesitation in saying that he would be prepared to support measures which would stop them from carrying out such processes, which were a disadvantage to the country and bad for the countryside generally. He thought that Sir Roy might well have enlarged on that subject ; he felt sure that Sir Roy had much more in his heart about it than that to which he had given utterance, and he believed the Institution would support any measures suggested for dealing with the landowners in question.

He had a certain amount of sympathy with a good many owners of estates who had held their estates for many years and who had said quite simply and pathetically " It is no use my " planting, because when I die this estate will have to be sold." He did not wish to enlarge on the question of death duties, because he wanted to hear what Sir George Courthope and others present that evening had to say on the subject, but it must be obvious what a really serious matter it was to the countryside, and more particularly to afforestation, that a man should always be looking forward to the day of his death and know that his estate would then be sold ; he knew quite well that it would be a considerable number of years before he could see any material benefit from planting trees, and so he naturally hesitated to plant.

There was another type of landowner to whom he would like to refer, *i.e.*, the very casual owner who said " I am not going " to plant, because forestry does not pay." Twenty-five years ago it was a very common thing for people to say that forestry did not pay. To a very large extent that idea had died out, but it was still held by some people, largely because they saw no financial result from the woodlands which they owned ; they employed

two or three woodmen, and when the woodland account was made up they found at the end of the year that the balance was on the wrong side. They did not know the difference between good management and bad management; they did not know whether their woods were fully stocked or badly stocked; they only knew that they had a certain amount of forestry on their estates and that it did not pay, and therefore they said "I am "not inclined to develop this forestry any further." If one asked them whether they paid income tax on their woodlands they replied "Oh, yes, we always do; we pay under Schedule A and "Schedule B, and we pay surtax." If their woods did not pay, why did not they proceed to put them in order and go under Schedule D and get back tax on what they said they were losing? It was an extraordinary thing that very few owners and, he was bound to say, comparatively few agents ever looked at that point at all. He thought one of the reasons for that, apart from the taxation question altogether, was that the woodlands staff on the bulk of the estates, as he saw them to-day, was very badly organised. He felt sure that Mr. Alan Arnold would not agree with him, having rather kindlier feelings towards the landowner, but he could not help seeing and saying that on very many estates there were two or three woodmen working without anyone organising and supervising their labour. It seemed to him that in estate work there was apt to be a lack of constructive policy, and he hoped those present that evening who were on estates would think that over and see whether they had really got any constructive policy or whether their woodmen were simply left to plan their own day's work and just potter about, as many of them did, clearing up the woods and finding themselves odd jobs without any supervision whatever.

Once more he would like to express his sincere thanks to Sir Roy Robinson for his paper, for what he was doing in this country for the great subject of forestry, and for what he hoped Sir Roy was going to do for the private foresters in the future.

Mr. C. F. Stone, F.L.A.S. (Chartered Surveyor), said he would like to add his thanks to Sir Roy Robinson for his paper, in which he so ably outlined the present position of forestry in this country.

In his opinion one of the most important points was the future of hardwoods, particularly oak and ash. There had been from time to time considerable criticism of the Forestry Commissioners' programme as to their failure to plant any considerable hardwood areas, and it had been pointed out that the private landowner could not be expected, owing to death duties and other causes, to plant hardwoods with any certainty that he and his personal successors would reap the benefit.

One fact had, he thought, occasionally been lost sight of, *i.e.*, the Forestry Commissioners were limited in the matter of the price at which they could acquire land. He was not quite sure of his facts, but he had always understood that there was a limit of £4 to £5 an acre on the price at which they could acquire land, and there was very little land in this country which could be bought at that price and be suitable for growing hardwoods. He might be wrong in that ; it might be that it was a question of a certain area having to be acquired annually by the Commissioners, with a limit to the total price to be paid.

Objections had also been made, as Sir Roy pointed out in his paper, that land suitable for hardwoods was suitable for arable crops and should continue to be used for that purpose. On the other hand, very large areas of suitable land had grown good crops of hardwoods and were at present either derelict or so sparsely covered with timber that their retention as woodland was uneconomic. Hundreds of acres of that kind were in the hands of owner-occupiers or the owners of quite small estates, and unless such owners could be persuaded to plant, the position appeared to be difficult. Many of those estates, as Mr. Leslie Wood had said, carried only two or three woodmen, and some of them were not qualified to undertake planting and were kept busy with other work in the woods.

In order to try to find a way out of these difficulties he ventured to make the following suggestions. The Forestry Commission should be empowered to acquire by purchase, or preferably to lease, what he called derelict areas, which had grown hardwoods, for the purpose of replanting hardwoods. If that could be done in such a way that the owners retained all rights of sporting, he thought there would be more likelihood of hardwood planting being done than there was under the present system of grants for planting. He appreciated the difficulty that there would be in the management of small areas by the Forestry Commission, but on any ordinary estate woodlands were scattered and the woodland staff had to move about, and presumably the Commissioners could arrange for planting gangs to cover certain areas and for subsequent supervision to be arranged in the same way.

He suggested that owners might be willing to accept a small rent to help towards the cost of keeping up woodland fences, gates, rides, and so on, or, if the Commissioners undertook the whole work, the rent might be merely nominal, because the woodlands would not be alienated from the owner, who would still have his sporting rights. Presumably the ultimate crop would belong to the nation, but where there was already some timber on the land the owner should be paid for it.

His suggestions might be impracticable, but they might

provide one possible way of bringing the derelict areas back into hardwood planting where the owner was not able or inclined to plant. Everyone present that evening would be glad to hear from Sir Roy that a fresh census was to be taken of the woodlands of the whole country ; that would show the derelict areas all over the country and would provide an opportunity of noting derelict areas of hardwoods suitable for replanting.

The only other matter to which he wished to refer was the question of thinnings. The Forestry Commissioners were now beginning to thin their very large areas and would continue to do so, and presumably they had some means of disposing of those thinnings. He thought that landowners, particularly the smaller ones, would like to know whether they were likely to have any assistance in disposing of the thinnings of their coniferous crops, so that they would not be left with them on their hands and find no market for them. He thought that if some assistance could be given in that direction it would encourage owners to plant coniferous trees, as they would have some return from the thinnings.

Mr. Alan Arnold had dealt with the question of prices and tariffs. He thought he was right in saying that the suggestion of tariffs was turned down largely because the Board of Trade could not be shown what stocks of home-grown timber there were in the country and what likelihood there was of those coming on to the market. The new census should be the beginning of collective information which should help in the future with regard to that question.

Mr. W. M. F. Vane (Professional Associate), representing the Junior Organisation, said he was very glad to have the opportunity of taking part in the discussion on Sir Roy Robinson's paper, because forestry was a subject that had always interested him. He was specially honoured by being asked to speak as the representative of the Junior Organisation, but he thought it only fair to say that the members of that organisation were not responsible for any views which he might express.

He wished to add a few words to what had already been said about grants. He spoke from the point of view of a receiver of grants, as he had been a grateful receiver of them every year since they had been instituted, being the owner of woodlands on the edge of the Lake District. In his view the grants were ample to encourage the landowner to institute a proper planting campaign, provided that he had something saleable which he could realise while his new plantations were maturing. If he found that he had nothing saleable on his land, he did not think that any grants or financial assistance would induce him to plant, nor would he really be justified in starting to invest money in tree growing when he

had not the security that his fathers had. He did not think that would be right, because why should the taxpayer and the nation at large subsidise a man who had failed in his business? When such landowners now found that they had very little standing on their land, having in the past sold timber and put the money to other uses, he did not see why the taxpayer should now be expected to help them financially ; nor did he think that the urban population would allow it to be done, because doles to landlords had never been popular. If landowners pressed too hard for large grants they might, through being greedy, lose all.

He had come to the same conclusion as Mr. C. F. Stone with regard to the way derelict woodlands could be made profitable again, *i.e.*, that the Forestry Commission should take them over. A good example was provided by the Midlands of England, where there were woods which once bore good oak and now nothing but scrub and waterlogged soil. It was known that small areas were more expensive to administer than large areas, but private owners had had to manage with small areas in the past, and he could not see why the Forestry Commission could not show more interest in small areas. England was a small country and a thickly populated one, and it was only in a very few districts that sufficient land could be acquired in large blocks to enable forestry to be carried on as it was carried on in Continental countries that were ahead of this country in forestry matters. Other parts of England, where, he thought, the Forestry Commission might take an interest in smaller areas were districts such as West and South-West Durham, where there was plenty of land, some of it derelict woodland and some of it more suitable for woodland than for the agricultural uses to which it was now put. He referred to land 600 to 800 feet above sea level and not above 1,000 feet. There were many unemployed workers in those districts, and a planting programme would be extremely welcome and would help to resuscitate districts which from many points of view had only a hopeless future. In such districts there could be no complaints about amenities being destroyed or about the displacement of Herdwick sheep.

He hoped that the Forestry Commission would lead a crusade against rabbits, because the rabbit was the greatest enemy of woodlands. A year ago a Select Committee of the House of Lords had reported on the rabbit trouble, but that report was a useless one ; it simply left the position as it was before. If there were fewer rabbits, the cost of planting would be reduced, and there would be less complaint about the smallness of the grants. He earnestly hoped that the Forestry Commission would help landowners to exterminate rabbits, because nothing short of extermination would be any good in the long run.

He wished to thank Sir Roy very much, on behalf of the Junior Organisation, for his paper, and to wish the Forestry Commission every success in anything it might do to improve British forestry. Sir Roy had mentioned Evelyn's *Sylva,* and there was a sentence in the introduction to that book which he would like to quote, because it showed that the position was very much the same now as it had been two and a half centuries ago. Evelyn railed against "impolite waste" and "universal sloth," and then prayed that people should address themselves to their "better "natured countrymen, that such woods as do yet remain entire "might be carefully preserved and such as art destroyed sedulously "repaired. It is what all persons who are owners of land may "contribute to, with infinite delight as well as profit, who are "touched with that laudable ambition of imitating their illustrious "ancestors and of worthily serving their generation."

The PRESIDENT, in inviting Sir George Courthope to take part in the discussion, said that Sir George was a member of the Forestry Commission and a great landowner. The original rafters of Westminster Hall were made from timber on his estate, and the repairs recently carried out in that Hall had been done with timber from the same estate, from trees which had been planted by Sir George Courthope's ancestors.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir GEORGE LOYD COURTHOPE, BT., M.C., M.P. (Associate Member of Council), said that as one of Sir Roy Robinson's colleagues he was most grateful for the opportunity of adding a word or two to the thanks which had already been expressed to Sir Roy by several speakers. In doing so he wished to make a few disconnected remarks which had been suggested to him either by Sir Roy's paper or by the speeches of those who had taken part in the discussion thereon. He was sure he was expressing the feeling of many of those present when he said how much he had enjoyed the speech made by Mr. Vane, the representative of the Junior Organisation. He thought a good deal more would be heard of Mr. Vane in days to come.

He felt he ought to begin by referring to what the President had said about Westminster Hall. He was fortunate enough to find, when he succeeded his father as a landowner in Sussex, that both his father and his grandfather, who between them represented a period of over eighty years, had loved their trees so much that they had never cut any down. That was not quite the ideal of sound forestry, but it had given him the opportunity of providing some fine timber when it was required by His Majesty's Office

of Works for the restoration of Westminster Hall, Hampton Court Palace, and one or two other big public buildings. At that time it was not known to him or to the Office of Works, but it was subsequently discovered that Richard II., in the fourteenth century, when he restored William Rufus's original Hall and built the present roof, went to his ancestor on the same estate for his great oaks. He did not pay much for them! The original accounts were still preserved in the Government's archives. He might mention one other rather romantic little fact, *i.e.*, that quite a number of the largest trees that he had felled (and he had had to fell some very large ones, because some of the beams required were of huge dimensions) had over 600 annual rings. Those trees were in existence and were quite large trees when their neighbours were felled to build the roof which they themselves, five and a quarter centuries later, were going to restore.

He wanted to add a word on a very important point which Sir Roy made in his paper with regard to the imports of timber. Sir Roy gave them in terms of volume, and mentioned that the consumption in this country now exceeded 1,000,000,000 cubic feet annually, but he thought it was well to remember also that for a number of post-war years this country became accustomed to spending something like £40,000,000 a year on imported timber. In the last two years that figure had changed tremendously ; the figure for last year was not yet known, but it was well over £100,000,000. That could not go on ; this country could not go on spending a sum increasing at that rate, but it was what would inevitably happen unless some very rapid change was made in the way in which the timber was used, or something of that kind. It was inevitable because, as Sir Roy had said, there was a very rapid exhaustion of the natural softwood timber resources of the world taking place, and all the reinforced concrete and new methods of building, the use of steel and so forth, seemed to have this effect: not that less timber was required, but that more and more was needed. It was a statistical fact that more and more timber was required, and that made it all the more essential that a reserve should be built up in this country for national purposes and gave more hope to the private landowner who had the enterprise to undertake the work. He believed that the State was going to find the enterprise of the Forestry Commission one of its most magnificent investments, and that, if an estate was regarded not from the point of view of the single family that now occupied it but as a continuing thing, it would be a very fine investment for the estates as well. It was quite true that, with the present scale of death duties, an estate owner had very little chance of handing on his estate intact to his own family, but it would be handed on to someone. Even thirty

years in the House of Commons had not destroyed his optimism, and he still hoped that some amendment might be secured of the present incidence of death duties in time for him to pass on his own property to his children. He certainly could not do that with the present scale of death duties.

His own property, he said, was only 3,000 acres in extent, of which 650 acres were woodland, all small woods. He had not a single wood of 30 acres, and almost the whole of it was coppice and standard, in which the canopy of the standards had in many cases largely suppressed the coppice. As he had been clearing up he had introduced a very considerable element of conifers. There was a great deal of hardwood there still, but he had been planting an average of about 40,000 conifers every winter for the last 27 years, and he had more than doubled the carrying capacity of his woodlands in terms of pheasants, certainly without any loss to the quality of the sport that he was able to show. Many people said, possibly with truth, that pure conifer plantations were not good for game, but he would never recommend anyone to have nothing but pure conifer plantations. The plantations themselves required the shelter of hardwood outside, and that was ample for game purposes. He was quite convinced, from his own experience, that well-handled forestry could combine quite well the commercial side and the amenity and sporting sides.

He wished to conclude his remarks with a few words about Sir Roy himself. Sir Roy had been the Secretary of the famous Acland Committee, the Forestry Sub-Committee of the Committee of Reconstruction which was set up during the War, and he believed that Sir Roy was very largely responsible for the drafting of what was known as the "Acland Report," which was one of the most useful reports which had ever been produced on the question of forestry or on any other branch of the public service. Sir Roy had served from the very beginning on the Forestry Commission, and for some time now had been its chairman; before that he had been the Technical Commissioner. As one of Sir Roy's colleagues, he could say, without the slightest fear of contradiction from anyone who knew Sir Roy's work as well as he did, that if forestry succeeded in this country, as he believed it would, in spite of all the difficulties that existed, it would he due to Sir Roy and almost to him alone.

Mr. O. F. Cooke-Yarborough (Professional Associate of Council) said he had been very much interested in the paper and also in the discussion that had followed. He did not speak as a forester but as a resident-agent on a fairly large estate, and, as all agents knew, there was often very great difficulty in trying

to carry out a programme of planting owing to shortage of means.

He wished first of all to say that he quite agreed that there was no difficulty in combining forestry and game ; he had never found any difficulty at all in doing that.

With regard to grants, he thought the general public who had nothing to do with the land considered that the grants were a very nice present to the landowners. Landowners found them very useful, but they came out of the landowners' pockets to start with. There were one or two fairly large estates in his neighbourhood where the death duties came to 25 per cent. If the owner got £80 an acre for his timber and it cost him £20 an acre to replant, that left a net amount for death duties of £60, out of which the State took £15, and when he planted again the State gave him £2 to £4 per acre, so he did not think that could be called a gift to the owner.

Sir Roy had said that the public were becoming more and more intolerant of waste. He quite agreed with that, and he did not think the landowners wanted to see waste. All the landowners with whom he came into contact were anxious to do their best to improve their plantations, but there were still many more or less derelict areas ; he knew one or two which had been wasted for many years ; there was nothing growing on them and nothing to cut down to pay for replanting. If the landowners had the extra £15 which the State took they could afford to plant when they felled and to replant some of the derelict areas.

There was one other suggestion which he wished to make. He was now planting about 27 acres of oak and ash ; that was a rather expensive process, and he was hoping to borrow the money for the planting from the Lands Improvement Company. It was a very great advantage to an owner who was short of money to be able to do that, and it would help landowners to get their plantations planted.

He wished to thank Sir Roy Robinson for his very interesting paper.

Mr. F. L. Crow (Chartered Surveyor) said that, apart from the excellence of the paper, the members of the Institution were very grateful to Sir Roy for the publicity which he had given by his paper to the important subject of forestry.

He came from a district of valueless hazel coppice and standards on the borders of Surrey and Sussex, where he supposed the sporting rights were of greater value than the timber, and there the landowners suffered not only from death duties and the breaking up of estates by speculators, who stripped them of their timber, but also from lack of labour. They could not get their

underwoods cut at any price. He had offered to give many acres away to people if they would only cut them. He thought the remedy in the case of new owners was education, education and more education. He had always been told, and in his short experience he had found it very true, that it took three generations to make a country gentleman. The new landowners within a short distance of London knew very little about the countryside. Land agents did their best to teach them, but it took a long time. The more they could be educated and brought to see how important forestry was and that they would not lose money if they tackled their underwoods in the right way, the better it would be, and the present time, when they were getting somewhat increased prices for their hardwoods, was a very opportune moment for that education.

Mr. G. M. Jefferis (Professional Associate) said he would like to underline one or two remarks which had been made on points which he had found to be of some importance.

He felt that there was a great deal of loss in forestry and in the maintenance of forestry on estates owing to the lack of knowledge on the part of the landowners. He was afraid that, probably as a result of death duties and the crippling of the finances of the owners, there was a tendency on their part to cease to employ a land agent and to employ instead a secretary, who did everything from paying the servants' wages to trying to make a valuation of a farm, and of course such an officer could not do the work of an expert successfully.

It fell to his lot to go over many large estates and inspect them from the point of view of purchase and so forth, and he found that in many cases no advantage whatsoever was taken of the possibilities that existed for forestry. He had gone over one last month of 3,500 acres, of which nearly 700 acres were woodland, mostly hardwood, ready for cutting, and nothing whatever had been done. There was the most magnificently equipped saw-mills on the estate, yet the owner, who left the whole management of the estate in the hands of his secretary, would not have anything done to the trees. He felt that, if possible, it should be part of the policy of the Forestry Commissioners to endeavour to educate the landowners.

There had been a considerable amount of interesting correspondence in *The Times* on the subject of forestry, and one suggestion made, which he thought could be developed with great advantage, was that in some cases where one estate could not maintain a full-time forester he should be employed by two or three estates ; he should have under him two or three woodmen, who would carry on the work, and he would visit them from time to time and

supervise them. He would like to know Sir Roy's views with regard to that suggestion.

Mr. R. W. Trumper, f.l.a.s. (Chartered Surveyor), said he wished to emphasise the difficulty of getting replanting done owing to the breaking up of landed estates. When the new census was taken he would be interested to see how many woods there were of 5 or 10 acres in extent, and how many owners had more than a few hundred acres of land. There had been such a great breaking up of estates that there were very few owners who had enough land to make it worth their while to trouble about their woodland at all. It was necessary now to take up some of the waste land and start afresh, and a great many of the little 10-acre coverts would not be worth troubling about to-day.

He wished to thank Sir Roy very much for his interesting paper.

Mr. R. C. B. Gardner (Secretary, Royal English Forestry Society) said that his Society had considered very carefully the question of the general improvement of estate woodlands and had produced a booklet on the subject, which could be supplied to any member of the Institution. He would like to assure the members that the Society was very interested indeed in this matter.

The Society had instituted training courses for woodmen, which were being financed by the Forestry Commission, the first two courses having started that day. The idea was to provide woodmen capable of going out to deal with the smaller estates. He knew of a head-forester who was anxious to find two, three or four boys straight from school, 15½ to 16 years of age, who wanted to take up forestry as a career. This head-forester wanted to take the boys, knowing nothing, and to train them himself. He had told him he was sure the Committee of the Forestry Society would be delighted to hear of other estates that would be willing to take young boys and pay them a good wage (in the case to which he had referred it was to be 25s. to 30s. a week) whilst they were being trained.

With regard to the training courses instituted by the Society, many applications had been received from young fellows who wrote to say that they wanted to take up forestry as a career. They were not town boys, ignorant of what life in the woods would be like, but many of them were the sons of countrymen, *e.g.*, head-keepers or under-keepers, who wanted to take up forestry. It was very encouraging to the Society to receive those applications from young men who were anxious to go into the woods and take up forestry as a career with a view to one day becoming head-woodmen and head-foresters.

The vote of thanks was then put and carried by acclamation.

Sir Roy Robinson, o.b.e. (Chairman of the Forestry Commission), in reply, referring to Sir George Courthope's remarks, said that in an undertaking such as the Forestry Commission one man alone could not ensure the success of the work. As its chairman he had colleagues from all three political parties, and he found them most astonishingly helpful and determined to do what was best for the country and not merely what was best for any political party. That was a condition in public life in this country which made for the strength and permanence of its institutions. The Commissioners throughout had been happy in the excellence of their staff.

He wished to thank the members for the way in which they had received his paper, and particularly to thank Mr. Alan Arnold and Mr. Leslie Wood for the very kind remarks they had made about the paper and about himself personally.

He would like to assure Mr. Alan Arnold that nothing he had said in his paper should be construed as against the landowners and what they had done for forestry. He frequently said to his own officers "Go into the private woods and see what has been "done there ; there is a great deal to be learned." In fact the basis of the work of the Forestry Commission, when it began eighteen years ago, was the private woods. They were practically the only woods where the Commissioners could learn anything, and learn they did ; so he would like to make it quite clear that the Forestry Commissioners were grateful to the landowners for what they had done. He did not regard them merely as inefficient foresters, but they were very often the victims of circumstances, those circumstances being the economic difficulties which had arisen, especially since the War.

In reply to Mr. Alan Arnold's question as to the size of the mesh of netting required for keeping out rabbits, he believed it was 1¼ inches.

With regard to the cost of planting by the Commissioners, the figure he had in mind was £9 all in, a little more in Scotland and a little less in England.

As to tariffs, the Forestry Commissioners did not decide the tariffs on timber. There was a special Board set up by the Government to deal with the question of tariffs, and that Board had to be convinced before any changes could be made.

Mr. Wood had referred to the waste of labour that went on in the woodlands, the lack of planning and so on. He had seen an example of that recently, when he went on to an estate where a great number of woodmen were employed. He wandered through the woods the whole day and could not see one single thing of

permanent value which they had done, and yet people were surprised that the woods did not pay. He agreed with Mr. Wood that if there was proper planning and if labour was arranged a little better the woods might be worked to greater advantage.

Mr. Stone had referred to hardwoods and to the limit of price which the Forestry Commissioners could pay for land. The Commissioners might very well be in the position of buying land from any one of those present at the meeting that evening, and he felt sure it would be a mistake if he disclosed maximum or minimum prices. He would like to point out, however, that the question of hardwoods was not essentially a question of price ; it was mainly a question of the availability of land. Apart from the existing woodland, the land which was suitable for hardwood cultivation was, in the main, land which was also suitable for food production. When the Forestry Commissioners began to acquire land which was permanent pasture or arable land, they immediately heard all about it, but in fact they had from time to time refused to take up land, cheap land at £3 or £4 an acre, suitable for hardwood planting, when they thought that the land ought to be kept available for food production.

The Forestry Commissioners were planting about 3,000 acres of hardwoods this year. If, instead of saying that they were planting 3,000 acres, they said they were putting in 10,000,000 plants and were not planting 50,000,000 conifers as well as 10,000,000 hardwoods, uninformed people would say what admirable work the Forestry Commissioners were doing. Should the Commissioners therefore stop planting 50,000,000 conifers and restrict their planting to 10,000,000 hardwoods? Would that be better than doing the two?

It had been suggested by Mr. Stone that the Forestry Commissioners should purchase certain types of derelict land. That, of course, the Commissioners were always prepared to do ; they had a perfectly insatiable appetite for land. They were prepared to purchase or lease any land which was too poor for anything but timber production or was derelict hardwood land or derelict woodland. There was a difficulty in carrying out Mr. Stone's suggestion that the Forestry Commissioners should purchase or lease quite small parcels of land. The cost of fencing, netting and supervising little patches of woodland, 15 or 20 acres in extent, was considerable, and unless there was supervision the woods would not grow up. As the operations of the Commissioners extended more and more over the country, however, it became easier to deal with small areas, because there would be a representative of the Commissioners nearer to any given woodland. But at the back of the whole question of dealing with small areas was the rabbit problem. If a fence was put round a small woodland and there

was no one there to look after it, rabbits were almost sure to get in and spoil the plantation. If he could lead a crusade against rabbits he would be glad to do so.

He wished to join with Sir George Courthope in congratulating Mr. Vane on his excellent speech. Mr. Vane was the only man he had ever heard who said without qualification that the grant was sufficient. Generally the Commissioners were told that the grant was totally inadequate.

If everyone would do his best in the matter of forestry he thought that something useful would be accomplished. It was the first few years that were the hardest in forestry ; after that there could be no greater pleasure than to watch the development of well-managed plantations.

Paper No. 581.

RE-DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES UNDER THE HOUSING ACT, 1936.

By L. H. Keay, O.B.E., M.Arch.(Liverpool), F.R.I.B.A.

Paper to be discussed at the Ordinary General Meeting of the Chartered Surveyors' Institution on Monday, 7th February, 1938.

Before dealing with the action that may be necessary and the procedure which must be adopted in order to effect the re-development of an area under the Housing Act, 1936, it may be of interest to refer briefly to the conditions which still obtain in many of the large industrial towns of the country and which it is now the statutory duty of local authorities to correct under the powers of this consolidating Act.

General.

Behind many imposing thoroughfares may still be found the narrow streets, unsuited to modern transport, flanked by crowded and ill-planned houses, some of the larger of which may have been converted in part into shops, and others used entirely for industrial purposes. The insanitary and congested properties, now being dealt with by local authorities under their slum clearance programmes, are often the legacy of that period of unprecedented development which was concurrent with the great industrial revival at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.

Between 1801 and 1841 the population of the country rose from 8,892,556 to 15,914,148, and the number of

inhabited houses from 1,575,923 to 2,943,945. This development was uncontrolled by by-law and seldom formed part of any preconceived plan. It is interesting to refer to the census returns of this period affecting any of our large industrial towns and to study such plans as are available in order to ascertain the manner in which development took place to accommodate the rapid increase in population.

Housing by the Local Authorities.

It was not until the beginning of the present century, with certain rare exceptions, that local authorities became actively engaged in the building of houses for that section of the community which has up to the present baffled parliamentary definition—the working classes. Under its local Act of 1864, known as the Sanitary Amendment Act, Liverpool carried out pioneer work in connection with slum clearance, and before the War no less than 12,000 of the worst of its insanitary houses had been demolished and alternative accommodation had been provided for many of the displaced families at rents they were able to pay, as nearly as possible equal to the rents paid for their former insanitary dwellings. To this end a rate contribution was necessary, no other financial assistance being available. In the difficult post-war years State aid was made available by a series of Housing Acts, and building activity has been on a larger scale.

The primary intention of the Housing Acts of 1919, 1923 and 1924 was to ensure the provision of a sufficient number of houses of suitable size and standard to overcome the accumulated housing shortage. Comparatively little was or could be done under these Acts to relieve the serious conditions obtaining in the older working-class areas of our large towns.

In 1930, when it appeared that there were prospects of the relief of the more acute shortage, the attention of local authorities was drawn more particularly to the necessity for dealing with the clearance of the slums. The Act of that

year made it a statutory duty of every local authority to review the housing conditions in their areas and to submit to the Minister proposals for the provision of new houses, *distinguishing between those to be provided for the purpose of rendering accommodation available for persons to be displaced in consequence of slum clearance operations.* It was the intention that local authorities should furnish similar returns to the Minister every five years.

Under the Act the Government grant was attached to the person and not to the house, a method of financial assistance which has not proved satisfactory in practice. The primary intention of the Act was to ensure the clearance of insanitary property, but it was not contemplated under ordinary circumstances that the sites when cleared would be used for re-housing purposes. The Ministry Memorandum No. 1138, which was issued for the guidance of local authorities in operating the Act, refers to a higher subsidy being available for the building of flats when *" in exceptional cases it is " shown necessary to re-house on the acquired sites."*

In making a Compulsory Purchase Order for the acquisition of cleared sites, a local authority was empowered to include other adjacent properties, in order to make " a site " of convenient shape and size." The amount of land which could be so included, however, was intended to be limited, and as a general rule not expected to exceed twenty-five per cent. of the area covered by the insanitary property. The Act, which under exceptional conditions only contemplated small scale re-development, came as a disappointment to many who had advocated more wholesale operations in our large industrial towns.

In 1933 local authorities were required by the Minister of Health to submit five-year programmes for the clearance of the slums within their areas. It is fortunate that before many of the larger authorities were able to complete the planning involved in these schemes, the additional powers of the Act of 1935 (now included in the consolidating Act of 1936) became available. Instead of the isolated and specially authorised instances of re-building on the

sites of demolished properties, Parliament directed that re-development should be the normal method of dealing with those districts in the areas of local authorities in which bad planning of both houses and streets existed, even though all the houses might not be insanitary or call for attention under the appropriate clauses of the Act of 1930.

To those who had urged for many years the necessity of large scale re-development, Memorandum C, which was issued from the Ministry of Health to local authorities for their guidance in operating the Act of 1935, brought the greatest encouragement, particularly in its introductory paragraph:—

> "The existence of serious overcrowding in the central parts of some of the cities and larger urban areas constitutes a special problem which the efforts of public and private enterprise have so far notoriously failed to solve. It is recognised that a solution cannot be found in new building, however intensive, on sites more or less remote from the areas affected, and special provisions have been introduced as the basis of effective action to deal with the evil. These central overcrowded areas contain aggregations of houses, often let out in parts to several families, though ill adapted for the purpose, which are largely occupied by persons who for various reasons, including the desire to be near their place of work, are unwilling or unable to move far from their present homes. The resultant pressure on the limited accommodation available frequently produces overcrowding in an acute degree. Bad development, with mean and narrow streets, is usually a characteristic of such areas, the houses and other buildings being congested and arranged in a manner least calculated to secure adequate and economic use of the valuable sites which they occupy. The only way in which the overcrowding in such areas can be materially alleviated is by the provision within the areas of suitable accommodation for as many persons as the sites which are, or can be made, available will allow, if adequately developed in accordance with modern standards. As such areas usually contain few, if any, vacant sites, the problem resolves itself into clearing away a large part of the existing buildings and re-developing the cleared sites. Provisions have accordingly been inserted in Part I. of the new Act which will arm local authorities with the necessary power to clear these congested areas and re-develop them on modern lines."

The powers of this Act were not limited to the larger towns as originally contemplated on the introduction of the Bill, but were eventually extended to all urban authorities.

Many local authorities have wisely taken the opportunity of reviewing the slum clearance programme already submitted, having regard to the wider field over which operations can, and in fact must be, carried out if their statutory obligations are to be discharged. It is by such action that the criticism of much of the haphazard and unco-ordinated development at the beginning of the century—criticism which unfortunately can still be sustained—will in future be impossible.

The purpose of the Act of 1935 was, *inter alia,* to make further and better provision of the abatement and prevention of overcrowding and for the re-development of urban areas in connection with the provision of housing accommodation therein. In fact it added those remaining powers necessary to enable local authorities to deal with every phase of the great housing problem of the country.

The Initiation of a Re-development Scheme.

In 1933 local authorities had already carried out surveys of their districts to enable them to submit slum clearance programmes. The Act of 1935 imposed upon every local authority the duty of carrying out a survey to ascertain what houses were overcrowded and to submit proposals for abating the overcrowding. The conditions which obtain within various areas in their respective districts are known, therefore, to local authorities in consequence of representations made by their medical officers, by the overcrowding survey, and otherwise. It is necessary that when representations are now made to a local authority in connection with the housing conditions in its district, regard should be paid to the re-development clauses of the Act of 1936.

Section 34 of the Act, in defining the duty of the local authority to secure re-development, provides that if in any area the following conditions exist, that is to say:—

(*a*) that the area contains fifty or more working-class houses ;

(*b*) that at the least one-third of the working-class houses in the area are overcrowded, or unfit for human habitation and not capable at a reasonable expense of being rendered so fit, or so arranged as to be congested ;

(*c*) that the industrial and social conditions of their district are such that the area should be used to a substantial extent for housing the working classes ; and

(*d*) that it is expedient in connection with the provision of housing accommodation for the working classes that the area should be re-developed as a whole—

then it becomes the *duty* of the local authority to cause the area to be defined upon a map and to pass a resolution declaring the area so defined to be a proposed re-development area. The conditions of (*a*) and (*b*) are questions of fact, and the information and statistics as to overcrowding can be obtained from the census carried out under Section 1 of the Act, 1935. The conditions (*c*) and (*d*) are matters of opinion, and those called upon to advise local authorities are best qualified to assist them in coming to correct conclusions.

There is little doubt, however, that the fact that so many families continue to reside in houses of very low standard in any particular district is generally a sufficient proof of the need for further and better housing accommodation in any particular district. The purpose of re-development, therefore, has two objects ; the provision of adequate housing accommodation, and the re-planning and re-development of the district in co-relation with the provisions of wider planning schemes. It is essential, therefore, in the preparation of a re-development plan, the local authority should ensure that the Committees responsible for housing and

town planning should work together in close and continuous co-operation.

It is interesting to note that no limitation has been placed by Parliament upon the size of a re-development area, and the actual boundaries of an area will depend almost as much on planning considerations as on housing and financial considerations. So long as the four conditions referred to in Section 34 of the Act exist, the area may include buildings which are not likely to be affected in the process of re-development ; thus a railway station or a church, public buildings or shops and other buildings may be included, the user of which it is not intended should be changed. The procedure to be adopted on the area being declared a re-development area requires—

(1) That the area shall be defined upon a map to a scale of not less than 1/2500.

(2) The passing of the resolution declaring the area so defined to be a proposed re-development area.

(3) The publication in one or more newspapers of a notice stating that the resolution has been passed and naming the place where a copy of the resolution and map may be inspected.

(4) The forwarding of a copy of the map and resolution to the Minister of Health.

It is important that when such a map is forwarded, the local authorities should supply the Minister with the particulars under (*b*) of Section 34 of the Act.

The Preparation of the Re-development Plan.

Within six months of the passing of the resolution declaring the area defined on the map to be a re-development area, the local authority is required, under Section 35 (1), to prepare and submit to the Minister a *re-development plan* indicating the manner in which it is intended that the defined

area should be laid out and the land therein used, whether for existing purposes and for purposes requiring the carrying out of re-development thereon, and in particular the land intended to be used for the provision of houses for the working classes, for streets and for open spaces.

It is not intended that the re-development plan should indicate in detail the precise sites of the particular buildings to be permitted as this would be impossible until the actual lay-out plans had been prepared. The plan should show in the manner prescribed in the particulars issued by the Ministry of Health in April, 1937, the general purposes for which the land is to be appropriated.

It is in the preparation of this plan that the closet co-ordination between the Housing and Town Planning Committees of the local authority is so essential. Before any re-planning of the area is considered the official responsible should ascertain the nature of any town planning or road widening proposals affecting the area or the surrounding district. Where town planning proposals have already received approval the task of the planner is simplified. Where this is not the case greater latitude is possible, but co-operation with the responsible town-planner is still essential. In small areas it may be deemed advisable in the re-development to provide solely for the re-housing of the working classes, all industrial undertakings being accommodated in suitable districts as contemplated under Section 36 (7) of the Act. In areas of considerable size, however, it may well be that a re-arrangement of the area is necessary and that zoning must be made for such buildings as are necessary to a district which not only houses a working class population, but also provides for their employment and for those amenities which are now regarded as essential.

Whilst Section 50 provides that the re-development of an area may be carried out by the owners of the properties, it may be assumed that such action will be unusual and that local authorities will themselves be compelled to acquire the lands necessary under Section 35 and themselves give effect to the re-development proposals.

It will be appreciated that objection to the re-development may be raised at the appropriate time by those whose business interests are interfered with. Some of this objection can be met and disposed of during the period when the plan is being prepared, but it is perhaps wise to leave these considerations until the more essential factors governing the re-development have been provided for. I refer to those essential buildings such as schools and amenities such as playgrounds which it is the duty of the local authority to make provision for. It is found by experience that the principal objection to a scheme comes from those whose businesses are likely to be disturbed. This is only to be expected, particularly in those instances in which a business has been established for a number of years or is one associated with a particular district. This objection can be met, however, by the provision made in the Act and is one which should receive the special consideration of all local authorities. It is found in practice that though an industrialist may be reluctant to leave an old building occupied over a number of years, the move to more convenient premises is soon welcomed and in fact shows financial advantage.

Opposition from the brewing industry might be expected. In the scheme of re-development it may well be that proposals will be made to reduce the number of licensed premises often by as much as 75 per cent. Here, again, experience shows that much can be done by agreement without undue cost to the scheme or the infliction of any hardship on the trade.

As any plan submitted to the Minister may be subjected to the scrutiny of the Ministry of Transport and Board of Education, it is desirable that the plan should include for any proposals which may be deemed necessary by these two Government Departments. It may not be generally appreciated that in respect to certain classified roads the terms of the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act, 1935, may be applied and service roads may be asked for—a factor which may seriously affect re-development.

On the completion of the re-development plan and

before submission to the Minister the local authority is required under Section 35 to—

(*a*) publish in one or more local newspapers circulating in its district a notice that the plan has been prepared and is about to be submitted to the Minister, naming a place within the district where the plan may be inspected, and specifying the time within which, and the manner in which, objection can be made ; and

(*b*) serve a notice to the like effect on every owner, lessee and occupier (except tenants for a month or any period less than a month) of land in the defined area and on all statutory undertakers owning apparatus in that area.

If no objection is made or all objections are withdrawn, the Minister, if he thinks fit, may approve the plan with or without modification, but in any other case he shall, before approving the plan, cause a public local inquiry to be held, and may thereafter approve the plan with or without any such modifications.

It is in the period immediately preceding the local inquiry that steps may be taken which will lead to the withdrawal of objection.

If after the plan has been approved the local authority desires to modify any portion of the lay-out included in the approved plan, it will be necessary to submit a new plan covering the particular portion of the area which it is sought to modify, and before this new plan can be approved the procedure appropriate to the re-development plan must be complied with—Section 35 (6).

On the re-development plan becoming operative—*i.e.*, six weeks after the approval of the Minister and of the necessary notice in the local newspapers—it becomes necessary for the local authority to take steps to purchase the land for the purposes of re-development in accordance with Section 36.

Now armed with the necessary powers, the actual re-development of the area can be commenced. Difficulties will undoubtedly be encountered, some of which will merely be peculiar to particular schemes, but it is not proposed to enlarge upon those which may be met with, lest the faint-hearted should be dissuaded from giving effect to one of the most beneficial powers included in any of the post-war housing Acts.

It may be appropriate, therefore, to set out in some detail the various operations under these powers in the city of Liverpool.

The application of the Act to the Older Residential Areas of the City of Liverpool.

The advantages of the new powers will be appreciated better by reference to schemes dealing with a number of areas in the older positions of the city of Liverpool now in various stages of progress. The first survey of the Medical Officer of Health, upon which the eight years' slum clearance programme was prepared, disclosed over 13,000 insanitary houses scattered in small groups within the old city boundary. The inspection of the district under Section 1 of the Housing Act, 1935 (now Section 57 of the Act of 1936) revealed over 11,000 cases of overcrowding, many of which were adjacent to the slum areas. In considering representations made by the Medical Officer of Health under Section 25 of the Act of 1936, it has become the duty of the Council to have regard to Section 34 in order to ascertain whether the four conditions of the section obtain in the areas under review. Up to the present time the appropriate resolution has been passed declaring the following areas to be re-development areas, and in the case of the first four the re-development plan has been submitted to the Minister, and in respect to the first three the local inquiry has already been held:—

	Acres in extent
(i.) The Central Re-development Area ...	50·79
(ii.) The Pitt Street and Kent Square Re-development Area	44·10
(iii.) The Beaumont St. Re-development Area	12·4
(iv.) The Wye Street Re-development Area ...	2·5
(v.) The Athol Street Re-development Area...	97·3
(vi.) The Warwick Street Re-development Area	55·6
(vii.) The Brownlow Hill Re-development Area	15·12

It will be seen that at the present time proposals are on foot for the entire re-planning and re-development of a total of no less than 277·81 acres, involving the re-housing of an estimated population of 35,242 persons or nearly half the population of the entire city at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

As the Central Re-development Area was the first scheme of its kind to be submitted to and obtain the approval of the Minister of Health, some details of the scheme and the various stages of progress may be of interest.

On the 26th September, 1935, within two months of the passing of the Act of 1935, consequent upon a number of representations made by the Medical Officer of Health, the Housing Committee, being satisfied that the conditions of Section 13 (1) of the Act (now Section 34 (1) of the Act of 1936) obtained in the area referred to, resolved to recommend the City Council that the area which was defined upon a map should be declared a proposed re-development area, to be known as the " Central Re-development Area." This recommendation was approved by the City Council on the 2nd October, 1935. On the 4th March, 1936, the re-development plan, indicating the manner in which it was intended that the defined area should be laid out and the lands therein used, was approved by the City Council. On the 14th and 15th July, 1936, a public local inquiry (required under Section 35 (4) of the Housing Act, 1936) was held as

the whole of the objections made to the scheme had not been withdrawn. On the 23rd December, 1936, the Minister signified his approval of the re-development plan, which became operative on the 12th February, 1937. Compulsory purchase orders had been made in respect to all insanitary properties represented by the Medical Officer of Health not already in possession of the Corporation or for the acquisition of which notice to treat had been served under a local Act of 1927.

Two compulsory purchase orders have been made in accordance with Section 36 (2) of the Housing Act, 1936, for the acquisition of all remaining lands in the area required for re-housing purposes. The first dated 3rd March, 1937, was confirmed without a local inquiry on the 27th May, 1937, the second being made on the 28th July, 1937, and was the subject of an inquiry on the 17th November, 1937, and the Minister's approval is now awaited.

It is estimated that the number of families residing in the area is 1,350, with a total population of 4,780 persons. The total population who will eventually reside in the re-developed area is estimated to be 6,000 persons.

In preparing the re-development plan provision had to be made for a proposed new road, 120 feet in width, running diagonally across the site, which it is hoped will eventually connect Queensway (the Mersey Tunnel) with the East Lancashire Road. This was one of the primary factors controlling the lay-out, others of importance being the proper orientation of the groups of flats and the difficult contours of the site.

In the re-development no less than four miles of existing roads, having an area of 14 acres, will be absorbed into the scheme. Though this will necessitate a considerable alteration in the main drainage system and the relaying of service mains, and other incidental works, economies in street maintenance, policing and other services will result.

Provision is being made for two new schools, one adjoining an open space of 3 acres, a maternity and child welfare clinic, a meals centre and also for a club for adults and

juveniles, and for the extension of an existing public bath and washhouse. Shops will be built on the new frontages of the widened main business streets, and five modern licensed premises will replace the fourteen public-houses now scattered over the area. Negotiations which have taken place between the Corporation and the trade have made this possible and a very considerable saving in expenditure has been thereby effected. Certain industrial undertakings at present occupying sites within the area will remain, and others now operating in buildings, the sites of which will be required for housing purposes, will be moved to the industrial zone included in the re-development area.

It is estimated that the capital expenditure involved in the erection of housing accommodation will be £846,400, and that the additional housing rate which will be required to carry out this important scheme, based on the present rate of financial assistance, will be one-third of a penny in the pound on the completion of the scheme.

At the present time 213 flats have been completed and nearly one-third of the scheme is under active construction. During the next year it is hoped that an additional 300 flats will have been completed.

Those who have had an opportunity of seeing the site and the work completed and in progress will realise the advantages of large scale re-development in dealing with such an area and also some of the difficulties which have to be encountered in a scheme in which not only the existing streets are almost entirely swept away, but the contour of the land is also greatly modified.

* * * *

I assume that there is general agreement as to the urgent necessity of correcting the conditions which obtain in the older districts of many of our large towns. It is not enough that a town plan for these built up areas should be prepared, for this is but an indication of the manner in which the character of a district might be changed at some future time. Once a re-development plan has received approval,

it becomes the duty of the local authority to acquire all the property in the area within two years and to give actual effect to the proposals. We have accepted town planning as being necessary to ordered development. Many would go farther and urge national planning co-ordinating town and regional planning. As one who has seen the practical advantages of the re-development powers of the Housing Act, 1936, I urge all who may be concerned to use those powers to the utmost so that by the re-arrangement of the central districts of our great towns we may at least reduce to a minimum that outward spread which is so rapidly and often unnecessarily destroying the countryside.